GUIDE TO THE EO1 FINLAND FILE

[The E01 Finland file provides general information on the modern republic of Finland (ca. 1955). Finland has an area of 130,159 square miles (337,113 square kilometers) and is the sixth largest country in Europe. It is also one of the most northerly with one fifth of its land area above the Arctic Circle. The 1974 population estimate is 4,709,000 with a density of 37.7 persons per square mile (1975 Information Please Almanac). This is an increase of less than 500,000 in twenty years (1955 population - 4,215,000). Ninety percent of the population is Finnish and ten percent is Swedish. Although in 1950, 42% of the population was involved in industry (and 42% in agriculture), 69% of the people were considered rural. The largest city, Helsinki, has a population of just over 500,000.

Finnish (Baltic-Finnic Family, Uralic Phylum) is spoken by 93% of the population. Swedish is spoken by the other 7%. The country is officially bilingual. Russian, German, and Lappic are also spoken by small numbers of the population. Several dialects of Finnish, divided into Eastern and Western, are spoken. The Western dialects are closest to Estonian, while the Eastern dialects grade into Karelian in the East.

Finland is a democratic constitutional republic. It is administered by a president with wide executive powers and a unicameral Diet. There have been six major political parties in Finland since World War II and no single party has been able to control the Diet. They range from rightist to communist in ideology.

There is "no clear cut class system" in Finland (1: Indiana U., p. 101). The national income is fairly evenly distributed and extreme poverty is nonexistent. The biggest division is between Finnish and Swedish speakers. Up to until a century ago, all educated people were Swedish speakers and feelings of both reverence and scorn still persist to some extent. Higher education is open to all who qualify scholastically and social mobility is high.

The dominant religion is Evangelical Lutheranism which claims 92.7% of the population, although only a small percentage of that figure, maybe 10-20%, are active churchgoers. 1.3% of the people are Greek Orthodox; mostly the Karelians, who formerly lived in the East. A wide variety of other Protestant faiths, Roman Catholics, Jews, and even more than 600 Moslems were listed as present in 1955 (1: Indiana U., p. 212).

There is only one source in the EO1 Finland file. 1: Indiana U. is a concise summary of Finland and its culture. It contains information on history, geography, population, language, physical characteristics of the people, social and political structure, religion, and a variety of other topics. It was compiled by a number of social scientists as a monograph for HRAF, and represents a rather wide-ranging view of Finland as of 1955. It contains a large bibliography. The Finland file is small, but it contains some material on most areas of culture. The file was processed in 1955.]